



Connecticut Working Families

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Committee on Energy and Technology
Co-Chairs John Fonfara and Vickie Nardello

Testimony in support of SB-417 AN ACT CONCERNING CALL CENTERS AND THE TIMELY REPAIR OF PUBLIC UTILITY POLES and in support of HB-5465 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN JOBS

Submitted by Lindsay Farrell, Organizing Director

Thank you for hearing testimony today on these important bills.

Working Families supports the development and preservation of good-paying jobs with decent benefits that provide workers with dignity and stability. Both of these bills have the potential to maintain good jobs in Connecticut.

SB-417 strikes a good balance between leaving telecommunications companies' freedom in their business models, and creating incentives for those companies to do the right thing by both their workers and their customers. The legislation is not restrictive, but rather it encourages better performance as both an employer and service-provider:

- Consumers are provided the opportunity to request superior service from local representatives, and are also given the opportunity to choose service that encourages the protection of Connecticut jobs.
- The needs of consumers are met sooner because of better customer service, and faster responses to damaged equipment.
- Municipalities save money for not having to put police resources towards protecting the public from damaged equipment.
- The state has the ability to reward good local employers with more business for keeping jobs in Connecticut.

SB-427 uses the right incentives to improve customer service and to protect Connecticut jobs. We urge its passage.

Regarding HB 5465, Working Families fully supports green jobs initiatives that promote projects with a positive impact on our environment, and that create stable, good-paying jobs with benefits. We

recommend some adjustments to the legislation, however, to develop a policy that is broad enough to truly take advantage of the opportunities for growth of a green jobs economy in Connecticut.

We are concerned that the Green Jobs Advisory Board in Section 4 seems to have no role for consumer organizations, environmental advocates, or labor organizations. Consumer needs should be considered so that the demand for green jobs projects is increased, environmental advocates should be consulted as experts on this movement, and labor organizations should have input to ensure that the jobs we create are good and family-sustaining. Such roles should be protected on the Board to ensure that the policies established and the projects pursued include input from all effected constituencies.

We also encourage the committee to consider the New York model for home energy efficiency retrofits, which has been praised by the Progressive State's Network as model for the country.

- The program will be funded with revenue raised by the auction of carbon emission credits through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (REGGIE), and those funds will be used to leverage private and federal investments.
- The state will establish a revolving loan program to provide up to \$13,000 per residential customer to retrofit a home, and up to \$26,000 to retrofit each qualifying business, will also conduct energy audits, program administration and a credit enhancement for critical private sector capital investments.
- The program will front the cost of the work, enabling property owners to afford energy efficient retrofits. Although property owners will repay the full cost over time, their total energy usage will be reduced by 30-40%, providing them with savings greater than their loan payment on their energy bill will be less than what they saved, providing property owners with net savings.
- In partnership with the NY Department of Labor, the state will also create workforce training programs throughout the state to ensure that the state's workforce is highly trained and in place to handle mass-scale retrofitting.
- Finally, the legislation addresses one of the most significant barriers to scale for green jobs projects: consumer demand. It incorporates community outreach to proactively inform homeowners about opportunities to make such improvements to their properties.

More information can be found at <http://www.progressivestates.org/node/23686>.

Thank you.